



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian
Northern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 15, 2013

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nyn>

CONTACT: John G. Duncan

(315) 448-0672

FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS TWO SYRACUSE MEN FOR CONSPIRACY TO IMPORT AND DISTRIBUTE SYNTHETIC DRUG "MOLLY"

Syracuse, NY—United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian today announced that a federal jury has convicted **ROSARIO GAMBUZZA (age 48) of East Syracuse, NY** and **ERNEST SNELL (age 43) of Syracuse, NY**, of conspiring to import and distribute a controlled substance analogue, known on the street as "Molly," in Syracuse, New York between January 2010 and April 2011. **GAMBUZZA** was also convicted on 19 counts of money laundering in connection with \$73,000 dollars he wired to a co-conspirator in Shanghai, China to purchase "Molly," a designer drug similar to the Schedule I controlled substance, MDMA. Each defendant faces a maximum term of imprisonment of twenty (20) years, up to a \$1 million fine, and at least three (3) years of supervised release following any period of incarceration. Sentencing has been scheduled for October 11, 2013 before U.S. District Judge Glenn T. Suddaby.

These prosecutions resulted from an investigation first undertaken in the spring of 2009. Agencies included the Syracuse Resident Office of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)- Criminal Investigation Division (Syracuse Resident Office), the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office, the Syracuse Police Department, the Department of Homeland Security- HSI, the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office, the United States Marshals Service, the New York State Police, and the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of New York. The investigation, which included wiretaps on two of the defendants' telephones, revealed

that this drug trafficking organization was responsible for the distribution of over one hundred (100) kilograms of “Molly” during the course of the conspiracy. The “Molly,” manufactured in factories in China, was shipped to distributors in the Syracuse area, as well as other areas in the United States, where it was then distributed to others by members of the conspiracy. The large scale drug trafficking conspiracy, based in Central New York, involved co-conspirators located in Florida, California, Texas, Virginia and elsewhere. Twenty of the twenty-two indicted co-conspirators have been convicted.

United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian stated “This successful prosecution was brought about through the excellent cooperation of local, state, federal law enforcement agencies working together to combat the influx of ‘designer drugs’ produced by illicit drug manufacturers overseas. I commend these agencies for their tireless pursuit of those responsible for importing and distributing these drugs on our streets.”

DEA Special Agent in Charge Brian R. Crowell stated, "This investigation of local distributors of the manmade synthetic drug called 'molly,' led our investigators to China on an international conspiracy and 22 federal indictments. DEA and our local, state, federal and international law enforcement partners identified those responsible for peddling this lab-created poison for profit in our communities from the street corner dealer to the source of supply based in China. This investigation and trial unraveled a complex network of 'molly' traffickers. There remains one fugitive attorney Kenneth Fera of Hollywood, California and one fugitive hiding in China named Lei Zhang."¹

IRS-Criminal Investigation Special Agent in Charge Toni Weirauch said, “These convictions are significant as they send a strong message to those who are contemplating entering

¹ As to these defendants, the indictment contains only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

this emerging area of the illegal drug industry and bringing these toxic substances to our communities. Moreover, this investigation and trial highlight to the public – especially to our youth – how dangerous bath salts are. IRS-Criminal Investigation remains committed to working with our law enforcement partners in the fight against all kinds of illegal drugs.”

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Carla Freedman and John G. Duncan. Further questions or inquiries may be directed to Assistant United States Attorney Carla Freedman at (315) 448-0672.

###